

The Art of R.K. Narayan-As A Novelist

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Abstract

Introduction: R.K.Narayan can be acknowledged as one of the renowned novelists in Indian English literature whose contribution to the development of Indian literature using English is indeed remarkable. As a writer on Indian thoughts and ideals, he has proved his recognition in the field of English literature through writing domestic novels, social novels and also political novels. Most of his novels are of the daily life of the middle class families in India. The motto of Narayan's writings was to create awareness against the evil feeling of greediness, vanity of the selfish persons and so on. Most of his novels are indeed near to the heart of the readers. His sense of humour, the conversation between the common people, the life of food vendors, and the importance of sacred rivers, the way in which the school boys are sensitive of the teaching delivered by their teachers in their school, etc. are noteworthy in drawing the attention of the readers. Hence, it has been considered that the characters, situations, theme, places are very artistic.

Keywords: Different kinds of novels, artistic quality, sense of humour, reaching to the level of the common people, etc...

Introduction: It is said that once he even tried to commit suicide. Event though, he emerged as the greatest novelist and story writer. Indeed, the writings of Narayan are not of an age, but of all ages.R.K. Narayan graduated from Maharaja College, Mysore, in 1930. His novels: Swami and friends(1935),The English Teacher (1945), An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories(1947), Mr. Sampath(1949), The Financial Expert(1952), Waiting for the Mahatma(1955), Lawley Road(1956), The Guide(1958), The Man-Eater of Malgudi(1962), and other literary works have brought him fame and recognition. The Guide received the Sahitya Academy Award for the year 1960. His works throw considerable light on his character and personality. Narayan has often been compared to Chekov, the well-known Russian writer of short stories. Like Chekov, he selects certain moments of supreme

importance in life of his characters, and then explores those moments with care. He resembles Chekov in his detached, aesthetic attitude towards life also. Like him he also paints life as it is. As a writer he has successfully focused his attention on the domestic, social and political life in the Indian society. He did not go out of his limited region till late in life when his reputation as a writer was already well established, when he had already found himself. The formative years of his life were passed in his particular part of the country, and therefore, as a novelist, he rightly confines himself to this particular region.

It is the life of Malgudi which he knew intimately, which had fertilized his imagination and he renders it accurately, vividly and realistically in one novel after another. His characters are all middle class. It was the life of the middle classes of which he had the most intimate knowledge. His memorable characters are all middle class. Upper class characters and characters belonging to the lowest sections of society were outside his range and so they are seldom introduced, with any success in his works, it is the day to day life of this particular class—a class to which he himself belonged—the tensions and conflicts, stress and strains in human relations within the domestic circle of this class he had himself experienced, and hence he rightly makes them the basis of his works. His early novels are all domestic novels studying the relationships of husband and wife, parents and sons, brothers and sisters, etc., Objectivity and impartiality are the hall-marks of Narayan's genius. He has no heroes and villains, his heroes are all unheroic, and his villains have something good in them. The women characters in his novels are simple, modest, gentle, loving and obedient. All his novels are straightforward narrations. Narayan's range is limited in another way also. It is limited by his comic vision. His picture of life is always true to facts, but to those facts only at which a reasonable being can be expected to smile. He is also careful to survey his subject matter from an angle from which its comic aspects are most prominently visible. Human oddities, follies and frivolities are all observed and ridiculed. Indeed, his eye takes a merry twinkle as it falls on something odd or comic in character and situation. The regional novels of R.K.Narayan are the novels which deal with the physical features, people, life, customs, habits, manners, traditions, language, etc., of a particular locality. Malgudi is the real hero of the ten novels and the many short stories. Narayan is able to transform a particular limited region into a symbol of India and Indian life. Objectivity and impartiality are the two hall-marks of his genius. He presents life as it is, both the good and evil. His writings are entirely free from any ideological prejudices. He holds a mirror to nature, and like a mirror presents nature truthfully without any distortions. It is a fact to be noted that R.K.Narayan is no a moralist and no philosopher, but an artist, and like all great artists, he admires what is right and proper—the beautiful—in human conduct. He is a pure artist, and so like all great artists he also stresses propriety in human conduct, that propriety and integrity which can make human life more beautiful, more noble, and more worth living.

The characters in his novels have become so many guides to right and proper conduct. It is important to be noted that Narayan's novels are very attractive and artistic in drawing the attention of the readers. He was intimately familiar with its ways, habits and aspirations. Members of the middle class are psychologically more active, in them consciousness is more vivid and harrowing, and it is from them the novelist chooses his heroes, modest, unself-confident heroes. Narayan's characters are both types as well as individuals. As an artist, as a greatest novelist, R.K.Narayan has portrayed the true identity of the different characters or individuals through his noteworthy novels.

Conclusion: Thus, R.K.Narayan is regarded as one of the founders of Indian writing in English. His novels are noticeable for his keen observation of man and manners and his gentle irony, and he has proved his art of writing novels through his unique characterization and comic vision.

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